
Senior Projects Spring 2023

Bard Undergraduate Senior Projects

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closer closer

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closer

closer

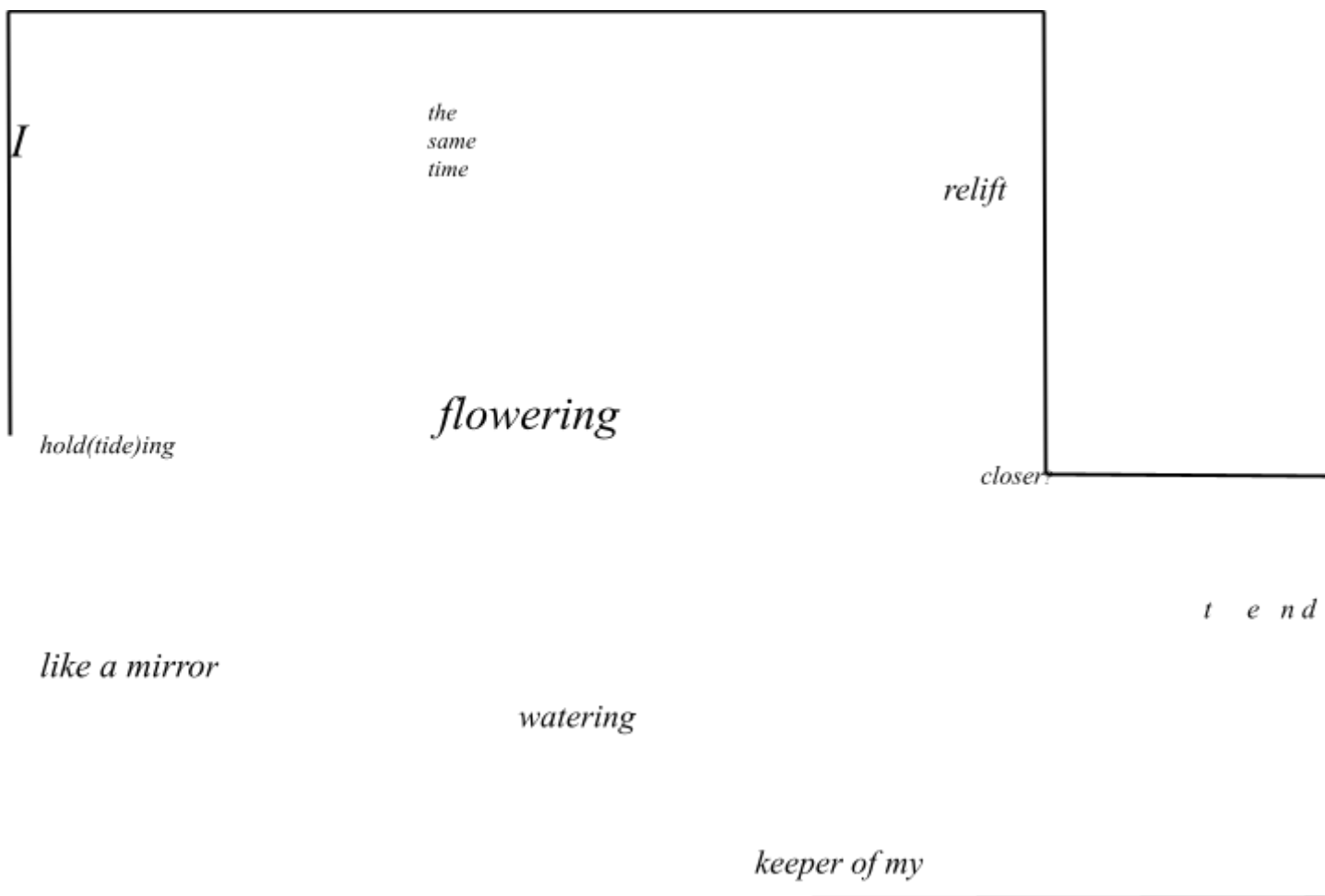
Senior Project Submitted to
The Division of the Arts
of Bard College

by
Olivia McLeod

Annandale-on-Hudson, New York
May 2023

closer

closer



watering

daffodils, grow light, unmixed concrete, watering

flowering

leaking bags, piano wire, the floor, counterweights, passing time

like a mirror

board used for ceramics, cinder block fragment, folded copper sheet, hammered copper vessel, dripping bag, amplification

I

leaning wood off-cut, piano wire, leaking bag, unmixed concrete, passing time

holding tide

a pair of wood boxes made by my father, concrete, personal pie, light, a repeated motion

the same time

slumped glass, grass, egg carton, soil, grow light, passing time

relift

tiles, grout, light, photo from reflection, retiling

closer?

nested egg cartons, oranges, mirror, light, a hole

tend

deconstructed frame, photo, balloons, breath, static electricity, daily tending

keeper of my

oranges, donuts, grapefruits, limes, key limes, blood oranges, garlic, crackers, mini cakes, powdered donuts, artichokes, asparagus, personal pies, snowball, cherry pie, buns, bread, onions, light, concrete

I want to know what closeness looks like.

I plant grass in the top of an egg carton and place a piece of slumped glass over top, a grow light set at one end. As the grass grows it touches and then presses against the glass, bending and contorting. I lift the glass for watering, the first few times the grass springs up, relieved by the release of pressure. I water again a few days later and the grass maintains the shape of the glass, every blade sharing this new, horizontal impulse.

I grew up in a house with a corrugated sheet metal roof and exterior. Mostly I remember the sound of rain, as it fell with an echo, on that roof.

I balance a leaking bag at the top edge of a board once used for ceramics. The board leans against a fragment of L-shaped cinder block. The leak escapes the bag from both sides. From the front, the drip slowly seeps down the surface of the board, painting its descent. It picks up dry clay and adds it to a growing puddle on the floor, becoming increasingly rooted as the water pools and dries, and pools and dries. From the back, the drops fall uninterrupted until they hit a piece of folded scrap metal that sits on the floor. The sound of the drip permeates the room. Sometimes rhythmic, sometimes melodic, always incessant. I am satisfied until the bag is empty and silence becomes an amplifier of its loss.

I want to make a piece that touches and loses touch over, and over, and over, and over.

I have a picture frame that never seemed to belong on the wall and lacked a stand to support itself. So I removed the glass from the front of the frame and leaned the separated parts against one another, so that they could stand. I put a photo of the pressing grass into the leaning frame. Everyday I fill a balloon with my breath and rub it vigorously into my hair. I find that the energy generated by this act allows the balloon, which is the same shade of green as the grass, to touch the photograph for about a day's time. There are days that the hold is longer and I need not add another balloon, and some where it is much shorter. On these days when the balloon loses touch very quickly, I find that the attraction once felt by the balloon towards the photograph transfers to myself, as I must return over and over to rub the balloon vigorously into my hair.

I plant daffodils in two mounds of unmixed concrete on the floor. I imagine that they have been planted and replanted many times. I water the flowers and listen to the concrete whine as the process of solidification begins. Perhaps this is their final replanting. I have hung a light between the mounds. As the daffodils open they turn their heads toward the light, looking to one another, just looking. Then, very slowly, they lean towards the light.

To bend towards the light. To be close. To seep from containment. To be compelled to touch. To linger in transition. To become solid. To leave a mark upon the floor.

I have learned that the materials have their own intimacies. I am negotiator. I set up situations where the inherent qualities of materials take effect. Marking one another, at times merging together, at times resisting contact. They leak, grow, press, rust, permeate, solidify, and decay. Each containing the ability to change its own status. I resonate with the processes and experiences contained by each piece. I imagine that we come from a similar place, having shared feelings and experiences.

I admire the materials' uncanny ability to articulate.

I, too, long to be closer, to bend towards the light, to seep from my container, to be touched and compelled to touch, to linger in transition, to become solid, to mark myself upon the floor.





